



Morocco's Atlas Kasbah Eco-Lodge is 80% Solar-Powered

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It may look like a castle, but this beautiful red-earth building is actually an 11-roomed hotel that receives 80% of its energy from the sun. And like the eco-lodge, Hassan and his wife H el ene of the Atlas Kasbah are no run-of-the-mill owners. He is Berber, she is French, and they both possess Masters Degrees in Sustainable Development.

Their facility in Morocco's UNESCO-protected Argan Biosphere Reserve – just a skip from Agadir's popular beaches – has won a bevy of green accolades that distinguishes it as one of the most sustainable eco-tourism establishments in the entire country (if not the Magreb!)

No doubt relying on their extensive education, the couple have devised a multi-tiered approach to making the Atlas Kasbah worthy of its title as a sustainable development, namely: water conservation, energy conservation, waste management, traditional architecture and energy.

In other words, they ensure that water is managed as efficiently as possible by using double flush toilets and intelligent irrigation for their organic garden, and by using natural cleaning materials that won't contaminate the water supply.

Energy efficiency is achieved by passive solar design combined with an array of photovoltaic panels that provide up to 80% of the lodge's energy supply. The pair also use low-energy light bulbs. Not only is this good for the environment, but it's good for business as it equates to lower energy prices in the long haul.

Recycling, reusing and reducing are all essential to a sustainable establishment. As such, Hassan and his wife try to avoid using packaging, they recycle what they can, and they also feed their vegetable scraps to their livestock.

Relying on traditional techniques and respecting the local customs, the beautiful 11-room lodge is built out of all natural materials – both on the inside and outside. Not only does this create a striking building, but this clever use of materials also aids in keeping the interior cool in summer and warm in winter.

90% of the property consists of wide open green spaces and many local inhabitants have been employed to tend the garden, cook the food and provide other services. In addition to benefiting the community in this way, the Atlas Kasbah regularly hosts educational programs in order to pass on their hard-earned knowledge.